

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

1971 raid on Cuban town,
one of many U.S. assaults
—PAGE 8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 73/NO. 48 DECEMBER 14, 2009

Imperialist troops out of Afghanistan now!



U.S. Army/Sgt. Teddy Wade

Afghan National Army soldiers, U.S. marines from embedded training team, and U.S. Army soldiers patrol Depak Valley, Afghanistan, October 30.

Obama deploys 30,000 more troops

BY SETH GALINSKY

In a speech at the West Point military academy December 1, U.S. president Barack Obama presented a plan to escalate the eight-year war in Afghanistan.

After three months of meetings and discussions with top cabinet members and military officials, Obama announced he was sending 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan. This will bring the number of U.S. troops there to about 100,000, three times more than

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Not one penny, not one person!

There is only one “exit strategy” that working people should demand in response to Washington’s wars in Afghanistan and Iraq: immediate and

EDITORIAL

unconditional withdrawal of all imperialist troops!

Conservatives and liberals alike have expressed criticism of the “new” course presented by President Barack

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Workers in Iran fight for back pay, higher wages

BY SAM MANUEL

Workers in Iran staged a sit-in and other protests in October and November for back wages, pay raises, and better working conditions.

The semi-official Iranian Labor News Agency (ILNA) reported that on November 12 Iran Telecommunication Industries (ITI) workers in

Tehran prevented the main stockholder and members of the executive board of the company from entering their central office. The workers were protesting the nonpayment of their wages for the last 11 months. After a few hours security forces intervened. The workers allowed the bosses to en-

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Workers protest outside Wagon Pars factory in Arak, Iran, in early October against nonpayment of wages. Workers haven’t been paid for six months. Wagon Pars makes train cars.

Eight more Somali men indicted in FBI probe

BY TOM FISKE

MINNEAPOLIS—The U.S. Justice Department released indictments November 23 against eight more Somali men in connection with an ongoing FBI probe of the city’s Somali community. FBI agents have been approaching Somalis in their homes, schools, at airports, and on the streets. Among the questions federal agents have been asking are: “How many times a day do you pray?” and “Which mosque do you attend?”

The FBI claims it is investigating a conspiracy based in Minneapolis to recruit, train, and arm young Somali men to fight in Somalia with Harakat Shabaab al-Mujahideen (The Mujahideen Youth Movement), an armed Islamist group with alleged links to al-Qaeda. The agency says as many as 20 young Somali men from Minneapolis—most of them U.S. citizens—have traveled to Somalia to join the group, commonly referred to as al-Shabaab.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, federal “counterterrorism” officials say the case echoes the type of “homegrown radicalization that threatens parts of Europe.”

At a news conference announcing the indictments, Ralph Boelter, special agent in charge of the FBI in Minneapolis, said he had “no indication” that any of the Somali men ever

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Falling real estate prices show depth of crisis

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Despite claims played up in the capitalist media about small indications that the housing market is starting to rebound, real estate values have continued to plummet.

Home prices in the third quarter of 2009 were down nearly 9 percent from the same quarter a year earlier, according to Standard and Poor’s Case-Shiller Home Price Index released November 24. In the second quarter the year-to-year decline was 14.7 percent, and for the first quarter prices dropped 19 percent. Though the rate of decline has slowed somewhat, in 20 metropolitan areas prices are down nearly 30 percent from where they were in 2006.

While new home sales were up more than 5 percent from a year ago, they’re down 69 percent from their peak in July 2005, reported the *Washington Post*.

“Real estate, which has traditionally brought the economy out of recession, seems increasingly likely this time to hold it back,” stated the *New York Times*. “The housing market’s epic boom early this decade has turned into an epic bust whose effects may take years to shake off.”

According to a report issued by First American CoreLogic, nearly a quarter of all mortgage holders are “underwater,” meaning they owe

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9/11 trial in N.Y.C. aims to further erode workers’ rights

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The U.S. government plans to use the prosecution in a civilian court of the five defendants accused of playing roles in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks to undermine democratic rights and further restrict political space for working people.

The Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to “a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury.” Defendants must be “informed of the nature and cause of the accusation,” against them, the amendment says, allowed “to be confronted with the witnesses” against them, and be represented by an attorney.

Statements by President Barack Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder have made it clear there will be no such constitutional guarantees for Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Walid Bin Attash, Ramzi Bin al-Shibh, Ali Abdul-Aziz Ali, and Mustafa Ahmad al-Haw-sawi. They are accused of “conspiring to commit the September 11 attacks” on

the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Currently incarcerated at the U.S. prison at Guantánamo, they are scheduled to be tried in federal court in lower Manhattan.

Banking on widespread revulsion over the September attacks, the gov-

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Washington prepares 4th round of Iran sanctions	7

Supreme Court upholds ban on book about Cuba

BY NANCY COLE

MIAMI—In a November 16 decision supporting censorship, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the banning of a children’s book on Cuba.

The court let stand a 2-1 federal appeals court ruling sanctioning the removal of *Vamos a Cuba* (titled *A Visit to Cuba* in the English edition) from Miami-Dade public school libraries.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) brought the appeal before the Supreme Court. “These books were removed under the guise of ‘inaccuracies,’” said Howard Simon, executive director of the ACLU of Florida, “but the real reason they were removed was because the books ran afoul of the political orthodoxy of a majority of the school board members.”

The primary objection to the book is that it portrays happy Cuban children and explains in simple text aimed at children five to eight years old that “the people of Cuba eat, work and study like you.”

Juan Amador Rodriguez objected to the book after his daughter brought it home in 2006. Rodriguez claimed at the time that in Cuba “you can read, but you can only read what they tell you to.” He urged the Miami-Dade school board to ensure that no students here be allowed to read *Vamos a Cuba*.

Although the administration of the school district and two academic advisory committees disagreed, the school board voted that year to pull the books off library shelves, along with the rest of the series of books from publisher Heinemann Library. The company publishes books aimed at introducing young readers to the geography, customs, and

daily life of various countries.

The ACLU sued, arguing that banning the books violated the First Amendment. The federal district court agreed and ordered the book put back on the shelves. But the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta reversed the federal district court in February 2009 and upheld the school board’s action in banning the book. The court ruled that the board’s action was simply a matter of setting educational standards in Miami-Dade.

“This is a great victory for the School Board and for Cuban Americans,” board member Perla Tabares Hantman told the *Miami Herald* after the Supreme Court decision. The Associated Press reported that former school board chair Frank Bolaños, who championed efforts to ban the book from school libraries, “said the case sets precedent for districts to back parents’ rights in future cases.”

The ACLU’s Howard Simon said if this case “is to become the new standard for censoring books from public library shelves, the ACLU may be immersed in censorship battles for years to come.”

Gov’t doesn’t report two-thirds of workplace injuries

BY SETH GALINSKY

Statistics don’t lie . . . or do they? A new report documents that up to two-thirds of all workplace injuries and illnesses are not included in the nationwide data compiled each year by the U.S. government.

This conclusion of the Government Accountability Office (GAO) will come as no surprise to most workers, who are all too familiar with cover-

Pathfinder well received at African Studies event



Militant/Maceo Dixon

A participant among the 500 attending the 52nd annual meeting of the African Studies Association in New Orleans November 19–21 stops at the Pathfinder booth. The publisher had brisk sales of some 80 titles totaling \$961. The best sellers were 13 copies of various issues of the Marxist magazine *New International* and the French edition, *Nouvelle Internationale*, as well as 12 copies of *Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa*.

ups by bosses of on-the-job injuries.

The GAO notes that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), a division of the Department of Labor, has reported that the rate of workplace injuries has steadily declined since 1992.

The GAO explains that 83 percent of businesses are not required to report work-related injuries either because they are “too small” or because they are in industries that “historically” have low rates of injuries and are exempted by OSHA.

In the remaining companies, injuries and illnesses are underreported.

Doctors and nurses told the GAO they were often pressured by the bosses of injured workers to hide or downplay injuries or illnesses and provide insufficient medical treatment.

One health-care worker told the GAO of an injured worker’s boss who took the worker to several medical offices until finding one that agreed to certify that the injury needed only first

aid, and was not a recordable injury.

Some 67 percent of health-care practitioners interviewed said that workers often feared disciplinary action for reporting an injury or illness. Some plants offer bonuses to workers if the department they work in is injury-free, increasing pressure to not report injuries.

Placing workers on “light duty” is common practice in some meatpacking plants with high injury rates. Injured workers are required to punch in every day and then stand around doing nothing so that the incidents will not appear in reports as lost-time injuries.

The GAO reports that “workers’ fear of disciplinary actions may be compounded by policies at some worksites that require workers to undergo mandatory drug testing following incidents resulting in reported injuries or illnesses, regardless of any evidence of drug use.”

In 2008, 3.7 million on-the-job injuries and illnesses and 5,071 deaths were officially reported.

THE MILITANT

Truth about Katrina continues to unravel

A federal judge has ruled that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers displayed ‘gross negligence’ in New Orleans, resulting in the devastation by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Keep up with the news on that and capitalism’s other social disasters in the ‘Militant.’



Devastated working-class neighborhood in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

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Stockholm meeting hears about case of Cuban Five

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—About 70 people attended a meeting here November 15 calling for the release of five Cuban revolutionaries unjustly held in U.S. jails for 11 years now. The featured speaker was Andrés Gómez, a leader of the campaign in the United States to free the Cuban Five, as they are known internationally.

The five are Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, René González, and Antonio Guerrero. They were arrested by the FBI in 1998 on a range of frame-up charges including “conspiracy” to commit espionage and in one case “conspiracy” to commit murder. The five were in the United States monitoring counterrevolutionary Cuban-American groups in Florida that have carried out violent attacks in Cuba with the complicity of the U.S. government.

Convicted in a 2001 trial in Miami, the five received draconian sentences ranging from life to 15 years. Gómez said that the impact of the worldwide effort in support of the five was registered at the October 13 resentencing of Antonio Guerrero.

“The prosecutor, that is the representative of the U.S. administration, told the judge that the government wanted to lower Guerrero’s sentence because of the strong public opinion in the United States and the world in support of him,” said Gómez. “That means that our work is having results.”

In June 2008 a federal appeals court vacated the sentences for three of the five—Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, and Fernando González—ruling the sentences were excessive because they were inconsistent with the court record. The appeals court ordered that each of the three be resentenced. Guerrero’s sentence was reduced from life plus 10 years to 21 years and 10 months. The resentencing of the other two is still pending.

Gómez is also a leader of the Miami-based Antonio Maceo Brigade, an organization in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution. He spoke about the work of the brigade and prejudi-

cial conditions that the five faced in getting a fair trial in Miami.

“It is impossible to fight for the Cuban Five without taking up the terrorism of the right wing there, and the aggression of the U.S. government that supports them,” he said. “For 52 years, every day, this danger is present. In the ’90s, when the five revolutionaries entered the right-wing organizations in Miami, the terrorist attacks were above all directed against tourists in Cuba, tourism being an important source of income for Cuba at the time.”

Another speaker asked if the new U.S. administration of President Barack Obama had made any change in relations with Cuba. “Obama said in his campaign he would reconsider the U.S. policies against Cuba. But so far nothing has changed!” Gómez said.

“Some of the restrictions for Cuban Americans to go home have been lifted. The demagoguery and tone is dif-



Militant/Dag Tirsén

Andrés Gómez, with translator, addresses meeting of 70 in Stockholm, Sweden, to hear about fight to free five jailed Cuban revolutionaries framed up in United States.

ferent from the Bush administrations. And some meetings about immigration from Cuba to the United States that [President George] Bush cancelled have been restarted, although at a low level. But that is all. The Helms-Burton law is a law. That law is not being changed.” Helms-Burton

places harsh restrictions on trade with Cuba.

Gómez visited Stockholm and four other Swedish cities as part of a north European tour to build support for the five Cubans. He had meetings in Belgium, Finland, Norway, Denmark, France, and the Netherlands.

Civil liberties attorney to be resentenced in April

BY CINDY JAQUITH

NEW YORK, December 2— At a hearing here today Judge John Koeltl set April 22, 2010, as the date for the resentencing of disbarred civil liberties attorney Lynne Stewart.

Stewart was convicted in 2005 of “conspiracy to provide material support to terrorist activity.” On November 18 Judge Koeltl revoked Stewart’s bail after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit upheld her conviction and ordered him to consider imposing a harsher sentence.

Stewart was imprisoned November 19. According to her attorney Joshua Dratel, she has been denied phone calls and visits ever since.

At the hearing Koeltl ordered a

“presentencing report” from the probation department covering any new information or events since Stewart’s original sentencing that are relevant to her resentencing. Stewart’s attorneys stressed the importance of new information on her medical condition. Prior to the appeals court ruling, she had been scheduled for surgery on December 7 that would require four to six weeks’ recovery time.

The judge is requesting the presentencing report by Feb. 19, 2010, after which both the government and Stewart’s attorneys can submit arguments.

Stewart was convicted for distributing a press release from an imprisoned client, Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman. He had been sentenced in 1996

to life in prison plus 65 years, framed up on charges of “seditious conspiracy” based on alleged links to the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993. Prison officials had imposed draconian restrictions on Abdel-Rahman’s ability to communicate, give interviews, or even call his family.

Stewart put out the press release in 2000. It was not until 2002—on the heels of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon—that then attorney general John Ashcroft announced the indictment of Stewart.

The government sought a 30-year sentence for Stewart, who is now 70 years old. Koeltl gave her 28 months. The appeals court urged him to reconsider the length of the sentence and suggested she should have also been convicted of perjury.

In upholding the conviction of Stewart and two other defendants, the appeals court also upheld the secret wiretapping and videotaping of attorney-client meetings and phone calls, the introduction as evidence of classified information that the defense was not allowed to see, the requirement that Stewart sign an agreement to observe government restrictions on her client’s communications, and the assignment of an anonymous jury in the trial. The latter was used to create an intimidating atmosphere in the courtroom and a sense that the defendants were highly dangerous.

Courtroom security today sought to impose a similar atmosphere. One guard at the metal detector directed supporters of Stewart to room 23A and said “‘A’ stands for other things too, I might add.” Nevertheless the courtroom was packed with supporters of Stewart and officials were forced to open a second, overflow room where the proceedings were televised.

Letters to Stewart may be sent to: Lynne Stewart, #53504-054, MCC-NY, 150 Park Row, New York, NY 10007. For information on her defense, go to lynnewestewart.org or call (212) 625-9696.

Somalis indicted in FBI probe

Continued from front page

intended to carry out a terrorist act in the United States. “But the national security implications are evident,” he said. “Americans with U.S. passports attending foreign terror camps.”

A grand jury indicted six of the men August 20: Mahamud Said Omar, Ahmed Ali Omar, Khalid Abshir, Zakaria Maruf, Mohamed Hassan, and Mustafa Salat.

Mahamud Omar was charged with conspiring with others to provide money and recruits to al-Shabaab. Omar, a legal resident of the United States who lived in Minneapolis, was arrested November 8 in the Netherlands and is fighting extradition.

The other five were charged with “conspiracy to provide material support to foreign terrorist organizations; conspiracy to kill, kidnap, maim and injure people outside the United States; possessing and discharging a firearm during a crime of violence; and solicitation to commit a crime of violence,” reported the U.S. Justice Department.

The other two, Cabdulaahi Ahmed Faarax and Abdiweli Yassin Isse, were charged October 9 with recruiting to al-Shabaab.

U.S. authorities say five of the So-

mali youth who allegedly went to Somalia to join al-Shabaab have died. They claim one of them, Shirwa Ahmed, carried out a suicide bombing in northern Somalia last year.

To date, 14 Somalis have been charged in the ongoing investigation, which the FBI says extends beyond Minneapolis to San Diego; Boston; Seattle; Columbus, Ohio; and Portland, Maine. Four have pleaded guilty this year to lesser charges that include providing material support to a “terrorist organization” and making false statements to the FBI and a grand jury.

Somalia has had no functioning central government since 1991. In December 2006 thousands of Ethiopian troops, backed by the U.S. military, invaded the country and dealt blows to al-Shabaab and other troops fighting to defend the government of the Islamic Courts Council based in Mogadishu.

The new Transitional Federal Government, which was installed with the aid of the Ethiopian troops, has the backing of the United States and the United Nations. Its authority, however, is very limited beyond a few neighborhoods of Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab is fighting to retake the capital.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Not One Penny, Not One Person for Imperialist War in Afghanistan/Pakistan: U.S.-NATO Troops Out Now! Speaker: Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

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Minneapolis

Unemployment and the Capitalist Crisis: How to Fight for Jobs for All. Speaker: Frank Forrestal, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 11, 8 p.m. 1311 1/2 E. Lake St., 2nd Floor. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Defend Workers Rights in the Face of Washington’s ‘War on Terror.’ Speaker: Ruth Robinett, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 11, 8 p.m. 45 Academy St., Suite 309. Tel.: (973) 273-0075.

9/11 New York City trial

Continued from front page

ernment hopes to win acceptance for curtailing rights for those accused of “terrorism,” in effect making it more difficult for workers across the country who are already denied basic rights in the class-biased capitalist courts.

No presumption of innocence

The denial of rights to the five defendants begins with refusing them the presumption of innocence, the assumption that they are not guilty until proven so beyond “reasonable” doubt in a courtroom.

All have been incarcerated under extremely inhumane conditions since their arrest six to seven years ago. The case of Mohammed is perhaps best known. A 2005 Justice Department memorandum, released earlier this year, revealed that Mohammed was subjected to waterboarding 183 times during interrogation. In this method of torture, the prisoner’s head is covered while water is poured over the face, simulating the sensation of drowning.

Top administration figures have stated that the men are already guilty as far as Washington is concerned. Asked at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing November 18 what would happen if the men are not convicted, Holder flatly stated: “Failure is not an option.”

Obama went further, telling reporters the same day that those offended by a civilian trial for Mohammed—portrayed by Washington as the “mastermind” of the attacks—won’t think it’s offensive “when he’s convicted and when the death penalty is applied to him.”

The Justice Department has explained that the five men will not have access to all the “evidence” against them. Holder told the Senate hearing the government will use the Classified Information Procedures Act (CIPA) to “protect classified material during trial.” CIPA allows the government to withhold from defendants any “evidence” deemed “classified information,” which is loosely defined as anything that “would cause identifiable damage to the national security of the United States.” Instead of knowing

what the “classified information” is, the defendant can be given a mere “generic” description, despite the fact the information is being used as “evidence” of a crime.

Holder also told the Senate panel that Mohammed would not be allowed to “spew his hateful ideology” in court and that the judge would impose “appropriate decorum” in the courtroom. Such broad restrictions further narrows what constitutes a fair trial, a danger to workers’ rights.

No right to choose counsel

Meanwhile, another dangerous precedent is being set in the “terror” trial of Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, a Tanzanian accused of “conspiring” to aid al-Qaeda’s 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Ghailani requested that the military lawyers assigned to him at Guantánamo since 2008 be allowed to continue representing him in civilian court. The Pentagon rejected Ghailani’s right to choose his own counsel and prohibited the Guantánamo lawyers from continuing to represent him. Judge Lewis Kaplan upheld that decision.

Kaplan said that while the Sixth Amendment does give defendants the right to an attorney, the “right to counsel of choice does not extend to defendants who require counsel to be appointed for them.”

Canadian official: Gov’t complicit in torture

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL—Canada’s role in the Afghanistan war has been a subject of public debate this past week as the U.S. government announces plans to escalate the war by sending some 30,000 additional U.S. troops.

Richard Colvin, a former senior diplomat with Canada’s mission in Afghanistan, testified November 18 before a House of Commons committee. He charged that Afghans who were detained by Canadian soldiers and later handed over to Afghan authorities were all likely tortured. Colvin worked in Kandahar for Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs in 2006 and later moved to Kabul where he served as second-in-command at the Canadian embassy.

Colvin told the committee the he wrote reports about his visits to Afghan prisoners and sent them to Ottawa. He said those in custody were not “high value targets.” Many were just local people in the wrong place at the wrong time. “In other words, we detained and handed over for severe torture a lot of innocent people,” Colvin said.

David Mulroney, who was a manager of Canada’s mission in Kandahar at the time Colvin made his reports, denied to the House committee that he had hushed up the reports that prisoners were being tortured.

A Canadian Press Harris-Decima survey indicates Canadians are twice as likely to believe Colvin’s claim that the government was aware of the torture of prisoners turned over by Canadian soldiers than the government’s denials.

The government is mounting a counteroffensive to rebut Colvin. Richard Hillier, the former head of the Canadian armed forces and top commander of Canada’s troops in Afghanistan, dismissed Colvin’s claims as “ludicrous and lacking in substance” when he testified at a Commons committee hearing.

London: Bus drivers strike over wage freeze



Militant/Hugo Wils

LONDON—About 2,500 bus drivers from six depots across East London went on a 48-hour strike November 20. The workers are protesting a wage freeze imposed by the East London Bus and Coach Company for the coming year. The strike comes after a 24-hour stoppage at the same depots the previous week.

“There are 350 of us at this garage and the strike is completely solid,” said Paul Williams, the UNITE union branch secretary on the picket line at the depot in Bow. Strikers cheered as Williams announced that no Route 25 buses had left the garage that day. Workers at the garage originate from different countries, including Poland, Pakistan, Ghana, and Ireland.

—HUGO WILS AND ROSE KNIGHT

Canada’s troop deployment in Afghanistan is scheduled to end in 2011, but Ottawa’s military commitment to the imperialist occupation has already been extended twice—in 2006 and 2008. Canadian troops based in Kandahar, where the fighting is fiercest, have suffered proportionally higher casualties than troops from other countries.

In another example of growing opposition to the war in Canada, some 400 people attending a meeting here November 24 heard Malalai Joya, a suspended member of Afghanistan’s parliament,

call for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S., Canadian, and other foreign troops from Afghanistan. The Quebec Federation of Women and Echec à la Guerre (Oppose War) group organized the meeting at the University of Quebec in the center of Montreal.

Joya was elected to the Afghan parliament in 2005, but was suspended from the legislature two years later for repeatedly criticizing the Afghan regime. She has been speaking on many campuses across Canada against the occupation of Afghanistan.

30,000 troops to Afghan war

Continued from front page

when Obama took office.

Obama presented the plan as a course to bring the war to a “successful conclusion,” a “transition” to handing responsibility to the Afghan government, and to begin withdrawing U.S. forces in July 2011.

Along with stepping up training of the Afghan army and police, Obama said that an “effective partnership with Pakistan” is at the center of U.S. strategy.

The U.S. government has pressed Pakistan to agree to an expanded use of drone attacks and to beefed-up CIA operations against Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in Pakistan. Washington has substantially increased aid to the Pakistan military and government over the last several months.

In recent weeks, several U.S. officials, including Gen. James Jones, Obama’s national security adviser, have traveled to Pakistan to obtain agreement for this course.

Obama wants up to 10,000 more troops from Washington’s NATO allies. Currently there are some 36,000 NATO troops in Afghanistan from 41 countries. In addition, there are more

than 100,000 U.S. “contractors,” a 40 percent increase since June. They do everything from security to construction of military bases.

The debate over the U.S. war and occupation accelerated after an August 30 assessment by Gen. Stanley McChrystal, who heads up U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. In that report, McChrystal said the U.S. military “could lose” the war unless it implemented a “counterinsurgency” strategy that included measures to undercut support among Afghans for Taliban and other armed groups.

He later turned in proposals for up to 40,000 more U.S. troops and doubling the size of the Afghan army and police.

The debate exposed divisions in the Obama administration and the U.S. ruling class over what course to take in the war.

Vice President Joseph Biden opposed sending more troops. Instead he put forward a competing “counterterrorism” strategy that would center on stepping up drone attacks on al-Qaeda bases in Pakistan and Afghanistan, increasing the operations of U.S. Special Forces,

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NEW INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY

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Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun

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Rebuffed by EU, rulers in Turkey turn to East

BY SAM MANUEL

Frustrated by decades of delay on its application to join the European Union (EU), Turkey has begun to turn to the East. Turkey is a key Washington ally in the NATO alliance.

According to the October 31 *Economist*, exports from Turkey to the Middle East and North Africa have exploded sevenfold in the past seven years, to \$31 billion in 2008. The business magazine records an impressive list. “From cars to tableware, dried figs to television serials, Turkish products, unknown a decade ago, are now ubiquitous in markets from Algiers to Tehran,” it said. The Turkish construction company Tav has just completed an airport terminal in Cairo and is building others in Libya, Qatar, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates.

The Turkish government has secured free-trade agreements with Egypt, Israel, Morocco, and Tunisia, and is looking to ink similar deals with the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, which includes Saudi Arabia. Early in October Turkish trade ministers signed 48 cooperation deals with Iraq and 40 with Syria. They ranged from tourism to counterterrorism to joint military exercises.

Turkey’s prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was welcomed enthusiastically in Tehran in October. Erdogan congratulated Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as the winner of the controversial presidential elec-

tion in June. Erdogan’s government has also supported Iran’s right to nuclear power and has offered to mediate between Tehran and Washington.

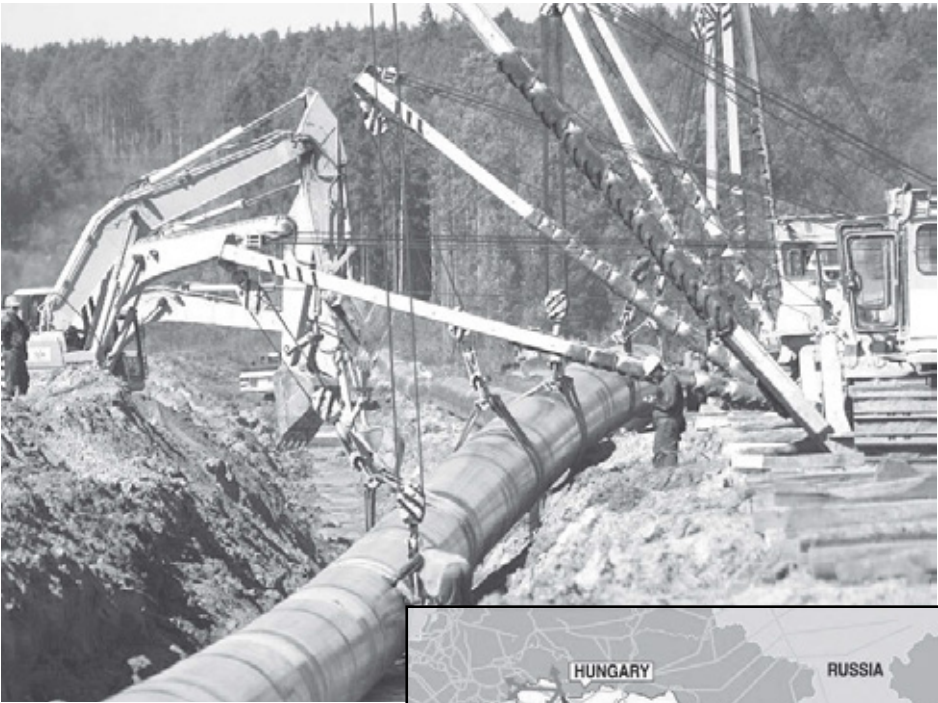
The U.S. government charges that Iran’s development of the capacity to enrich uranium for nuclear power is aimed at making a nuclear bomb. Washington is leading the effort to deny Iran’s right to continue uranium enrichment. The Turkish government has offered to store Iran’s enriched uranium while Russia produces more of the fuel for Tehran.

Turkey has also developed close ties with the Syrian government. In 2005 Damascus set aside its claim to the disputed Hatay province, which had been given to Turkey in 1939 by France, Syria’s former colonial ruler.

50-year delay

Turkey’s efforts at economic integration into Europe began half a century ago when Turkey applied in 1959 for membership in the European Economic Community, the EU’s forerunner. It has been rebuffed ever since with increasingly racist language. In 2004 then French prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin asked, “Do we really want the river of Islam to enter the riverbed of secularism?” French president Nicolas Sarkozy has said that admitting Turkey would “dilute” the EU.

What the French capitalist leaders mean is that they do not want some 69 million Muslims to have free movement



Nabucco pipeline under construction. Map shows how it will ship natural gas through Turkey to Europe from Azerbaijan, and possibly Turkmenistan, Iran, Iraq, and Egypt, boosting Ankara’s economic clout and competing with Russian South Stream pipeline.



in Europe. Citizens of EU countries are allowed to work in other EU countries with fewer restrictions. If admitted, Turkey would have the largest population in the EU after Germany. Turkey’s military is larger than any current EU member. Only the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy have military budgets bigger than Turkey’s.

Between east and west

Turkey’s capitalist rulers will continue their efforts—with Washington and London’s backing—to enter the EU. Speaking at the inaugural meeting

in October of the Istanbul Forum, sponsored by Turkey’s Centre for Strategic Communication, and supported by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, Prime Minister Erdogan explained that Turkey had no intention of acting as a “helpless supplicant” for EU membership and is instead “assuming a role commensurate with its status as a fast-rising power at the strategic crossroads of east and west,” reported the *Financial Times*.

In July Ankara penned an \$11.7 billion deal with the EU to build the 2,000-mile Nabucco pipeline to ship natural gas to Europe from Azerbaijan, and possibly Turkmenistan, Iran, Iraq, and Egypt. Washington has opposed the shipment of Iranian gas through the pipeline.

The pipeline will compete with a nearly \$14 billion Russian South Stream pipeline that will go under the Caspian Sea, bypassing Ukraine, and may come on line in 2015. In winter 2008 much of the Balkans and southern Europe faced freezing cities and homes due to a gas shipment dispute between Moscow and Kiev. European governments hope that the Nabucco pipeline, also projected to come on line in 2015, will reduce dependence on Russian gas.

Honduras: Deposed president not reinstated

BY BEN JOYCE

The Honduran congress December 2 rejected reinstating deposed president Manuel Zelaya. The decision came in the wake of a presidential election that has drawn mixed reactions from capitalist governments and politicians around the world, with some countries refusing to recognize the controversial vote. Opposition leader Porfirio Lobo of the National Party won the election, which 62 percent of voters participated in, according to the *Investor’s Business Daily*.

The November 29 election came just five months after former President Manuel Zelaya was arrested and removed from the country by the army under the orders of the Honduran Supreme Court. The Honduran congress named Roberto Micheletti as interim president.

The political turmoil erupted when Zelaya tried to organize a referendum on whether to change the constitution to remove the one-term limit for presidents, which the Supreme Court ruled as illegal. Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega recently made similar moves by securing a ruling from the Supreme Court that would allow for his reelection in 2011.

Concerned with restoring stability in Honduras, the U.S. government brokered an agreement that put Zelaya’s political future in the hands of the Honduran congress. Zelaya rescinded his agreement with the U.S.-brokered pact on the grounds that a decision by the legislature should have been made before the election.

A wealthy timber and cattle businessman, Zelaya was elected in 2005 and had pursued typical liberal capitalist policies. What antagonized oth-

ers in ruling circles, however, was his increasing association with Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez. Zelaya was responsible for bringing Honduras into a Venezuelan-led trade alliance, put forward by its supporters as an “alternative” to trade relationships with more powerful capitalist powers like the United States.

“For now the [Brazilian] position is not to accept the electoral process in Honduras,” Brazilian president Luiz

Inacio Lula da Silva told the *New York Times*. He suggested reinstating Zelaya for the day of the inauguration ceremony of president-elect Lobo.

All of the candidates who were on the ballot in the recent election were chosen in November 2008 primaries, and all but one of them had pushed for the elections to move forward. Each candidate has now accepted the results of the election, including the candidate from Zelaya’s Liberal Party.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 14, 1984

An estimated 2,000 residents of Bhopal, India, were killed by poisonous methyl isocyanate gas that escaped from an underground storage tank belonging to a U.S.-owned Union Carbide plant. Most of the dead are workers who lived in nearby sub-standard housing.

The so-called accident happened shortly after midnight on December 3 while most people were asleep. More deaths are expected, and Indian doctors are also estimating that at least 20,000 people could suffer serious after-effects, including blindness and sterilization of women.

In addition to the rising death toll, press reports described the fields in the path of the escaping gas as having “presented a scene of chemical devastation today, their crops of turnips and other vegetables withered and covered with a fine white film.”



December 14, 1959

Daisy Bates, militant Negro leader in Little Rock, and Ellis Thomas, the father of one of the integrated Negro students there, have been dealt severe economic blows by Arkansas white supremacists. Though the campaign of economic reprisal was organized locally, Northern big-business interests were involved in both cases.

On Dec. 7 Mrs. Daisy Bates informed *New York Post* reporter Ted Poston that she and her husband, L.C. Bates, would be unable to resume publishing their weekly newspaper, the *Arkansas State Press*, which suspended publication last month.

The campaign against the *Arkansas State Press*, which has been edited and published by L.C. Bates for the past 18 years, was organized by the White Citizens Council as a reprisal for Daisy Bates’ steadfastness in the fight for school desegregation.



December 15, 1934

In the political melee following Roosevelt’s demagogic move to “take the profit out of war” and Senator Nye’s flat statement that the President wants to stop the Senate munitions inquiry, pertinent facts have been suppressed. They are:

The reason behind the munitions inquiry and the President’s move is that the United States government is definitely preparing for war. World war looms. The rulers of all the big nations are bending every nerve in that direction.

[President Roosevelt] has done more in his short time in office to militarize the country than any other president since the war. (As this is being written the government lets two more contracts to the war manufacturers, one for 50 bombing planes, another for 150.) Much of the Public Works money allotted under Roosevelt has been diverted to the munitions makers.

Australia rally protests attack on abortion rights

BY JOANNE KUNIAISKY

BRISBANE, Australia—More than 120 people took part in a spirited rally and march November 21 through the streets here, demanding that charges against a couple of “procuring an illegal abortion” be dropped. The marchers chanted, “What do we want? Abortion rights! How will we get them? Fight for them!”

Organized by the Pro-Choice Action Collective, the demonstration was part of an ongoing campaign to demand that all charges be dropped against Tegan Leach and her partner Sergie Brennan. The couple was charged under sections of the Queensland criminal code dating from 1899 that cover “illegal” abortions.

Leach had an abortion using RU486 and Misoprostol obtained from Bren-

nan’s relatives in Ukraine. Brennan has been charged with helping to import the drugs.

If convicted, Leach faces a maximum seven years in jail and Brennan up to three years. A trial date has not been set.

Kathy Newnam addressed the rally for the Pro-Choice Action Collective. She declared that Leach and Brennan are not on their own and pledged the group’s help in fighting these charges. Explaining that the case has now been referred to the Queensland Department of Public Prosecution, Newnam said that state prosecutors can still decide to drop the charges.

Speaking of Queensland State premier Anna Bligh’s refusal to condemn this attack on abortion rights, Newnam said, “When you are dependent



Militant/Ron Poulsen

November 21 abortion rights demonstration in Brisbane, Australia, in defense of Tegan Leach and her partner Sergie Brennan, charged with “illegal” abortion.

on the political system you are dancing to someone else’s tune. We only need to look at history. The only way we’ve ever got justice is by fighting.” She shouted to applause, “Drop the charges! Repeal antiabortion laws!

Abortion rights now!”

Lana Woolf from the University of Queensland (UQ) Women’s Collective said in describing Bligh, “Under your leadership a woman is facing seven years in prison for having an abortion! We are for the right of women to have an abortion without being charged as a criminal!” Bligh was a young feminist activist when she attended UQ.

Several young women along the march route took leaflets and joined in. Others on the footpath applauded as the marchers passed. At the end marchers hung coat hangers on the fence of the Queensland State Parliament House pledging, “Never again!” referring to the days of illegal backstreet abortions.

Organizers of the march announced that a peaceful picket will take place December 2 outside the Eras Bistro in South Brisbane where Premier Bligh is scheduled to speak. The dates for a national meeting of abortion rights activists were set for the February 6–7 weekend in Sydney. Pro-Choice Action Collective members discussed being ready to respond to any surprise moves on the case by the Queensland government.

Philadelphia transit workers end 6-day strike

BY JOHN STUDER

PHILADELPHIA—Transport Workers Union Local 234 announced November 20 that workers had voted to accept a new five-year contract with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), the regional transportation agency. The 2,806-242 vote came after a bitter, six-day strike.

Many workers said they voted for the contract because it increases wages and holds off the deepest cuts demanded by the company. Members of the union—which represents 5,100 drivers, operators, and mechanics—get no wage increase in the first year, a 2.5 percent raise in the second, and 3 percent in each of the final three years of the contract. They also will receive a one-time \$1,250 signing bonus. This bonus is being paid by funds allocated from the state by Governor Edward Rendell, who moved in when negotiations stalled to try to broker a deal.

The contract increases what workers have to pay toward their pensions from 2 percent to 3 percent. The strike defeated SEPTA efforts to make workers pay a higher share of health insurance costs.

Support for the strike was mixed under the pressure of a vicious anti-labor propaganda campaign, which was aided by some of the tactics of the union leadership. The strike was

begun without notice at 3:00 a.m. November 3, stranding many area workers trying to get to their jobs that morning.

“I understand I’m the most hated man in Philadelphia right now,” union president Willie Brown told the press. “I have no problem with that.”

The strike took place while Philadelphia city workers and teachers have seen their contracts expire with no new settlement in sight. Some 22,000 city workers—including sanitation workers, secretaries, and firefighters—have been working without a contract since June 30. The Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, which represents the school district’s 11,000 teachers, nurses, librarians, custodians, and other workers, has extended their contract a number of times since

it expired August 31. The latest extension runs until January 15.

Both the city workers and teachers have faced a continuing antiworker campaign by Mayor Michael Nutter and other city officials, who say that the city’s 11.1 percent official unemployment rate and declining wage-tax income and other revenues mean that the city’s “financial condition is deteriorating.”

The results of the transit workers’ strike and the new contract emboldened many city workers. One group of city employees put out their own leaflet November 9 while the transit workers were still on strike, calling for workers to take a day off to protest the city’s refusal to negotiate a contract. The flyer described the mayor as “Mayor Cutter.”

New Zealand miners win a new contract

BY TERRY COGGAN

HUNTLY, New Zealand—As we go to press, miners in New Zealand have returned to work after winning a new contract in their four-week strike. Details of the agreement are not yet available.

On November 28 the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union held a meeting here to inform coal miners’ supporters and their families about the facts in the strike. Nearly 100 people attended.

The bosses at the state-owned Solid Energy company had leafleted miners’ households advertising a company-organized meeting the same day.

The dispute began October 27 when 160 miners at the company’s Rotowaro mine here were locked out during contract negotiations. Miners at the nearby Huntly East mine, and at Stockton and Spring Creek mines in the South Island, about 1,000 workers in total, responded by going on strike. Pickets were set up at all four mines. About 300 Stockton miners and their supporters marched through the neighboring town of Westport November 10.

The four mines are covered by a common Multi Employer Collective Agreement, with additional site-specific provisions at each mine. Agreements were reached at Rotowaro and Stockton, but workers there voted to remain on strike in support of the underground Huntly

East miners. The union at that mine points out that under a new seven-day roster they will have to work extra overtime to retain their current earnings.

Jim Yates, the union’s delegate at the opencast Rotowaro mine, told the community meeting, “We got our agreement because of the support of the South Island and the East miners. Now we are supporting them. It’s about sticking together.” While accepting a new shift pattern, unionists at Rotowaro fought off a company attempt to cut back guar-

anteed pay for work prevented by rain, and won an improved redundancy (severance) agreement and time-and-a-half for overtime.

Several of the miners’ family members asked questions and raised concerns at the meeting. “I have nothing but admiration for my husband and son who go down that hole every day,” said Shelley Lynch. “I’m 100 percent behind any decision the men go by, even if it means mince [hamburger] for Christmas dinner.”

For further reading. . .



Abortion Is a Woman’s Right!

by Pat Grogan, Evelyn Reed

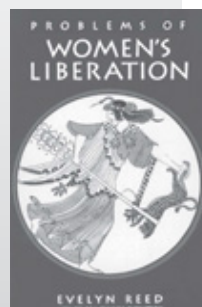
Why abortion rights are central not only to the fight for the full emancipation of women, but to forging a united and fighting labor movement. Also available in Spanish. \$6

Problems of Women’s Liberation

by Evelyn Reed

Six articles explore the social and economic roots of women’s oppression from prehistoric society to modern capitalism and point the road forward to emancipation. Also available in Farsi and Greek. \$15

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Members of Transit Workers Union Local 234 on picket line at transportation hub in Fern Rock neighborhood of Philadelphia.

Washington prepares 4th round of Iran sanctions

BY DOUG NELSON

The confrontation between imperialist powers and Iran over Tehran's nuclear energy program sharpened November 27, when the UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) censored the Iranian government for concealing the construction of a new uranium enrichment plant.

The IAEA resolution will serve as a basis for Washington to push for more crippling sanctions against Iran in the UN Security Council, as well as justification for threats to bomb Iranian nuclear targets.

In response to the resolution, the Iranian government announced November 29 that it would construct 10 new uranium enrichment plants and could curtail its cooperation with the UN agency.

The UN Security Council has imposed three rounds of sanctions against Iran involving travel, financial restrictions, and blocking access to nuclear technology resources. A potential fourth round of sanctions being hashed out could hit hard, targeting Iran's reliance on imported petroleum.

The Iranian government says the purpose of its nuclear program is to meet the country's expanding energy needs, as well as for use in medical research. Washington and its imperialist allies claim that the program is geared toward developing nuclear weapons. The IAEA resolution states it has been "unable to verify that Iran's programme is for exclusively peaceful purposes."

The resolution also states that Tehran's concealment of its new facility raises doubts about its whole nuclear program. Tehran says it began building the facility near Qom in response to Tel Aviv's threats to bomb its one plant under construction in Bushehr.

Demands suspension of new plant

The resolution demands that Tehran immediately suspend construction of the Qom facility and provide the IAEA with greater access to information and inspection.

Tehran has been providing the IAEA with requested technical information on its program as well as allowing certain inspections and UN cameras to monitor activity at its nuclear sites. But this could change.

Following the IAEA resolution, 226 out of 290 members of Iran's legislative body signed a declaration stating, "Because of the world powers' hasty move, the government should submit its plan to curb Iran's cooperation level

with the agency."

The IAEA resolution was sharply condemned by a wide spectrum of Iranian bourgeois politicians, both those supporting and opposing President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi said that if Tehran gives in to the IAEA demands, "then the hard work of thousands of scientists would be ruined." Mousavi's supporters organized mass demonstrations against the Iranian government after he lost the presidential election in June.

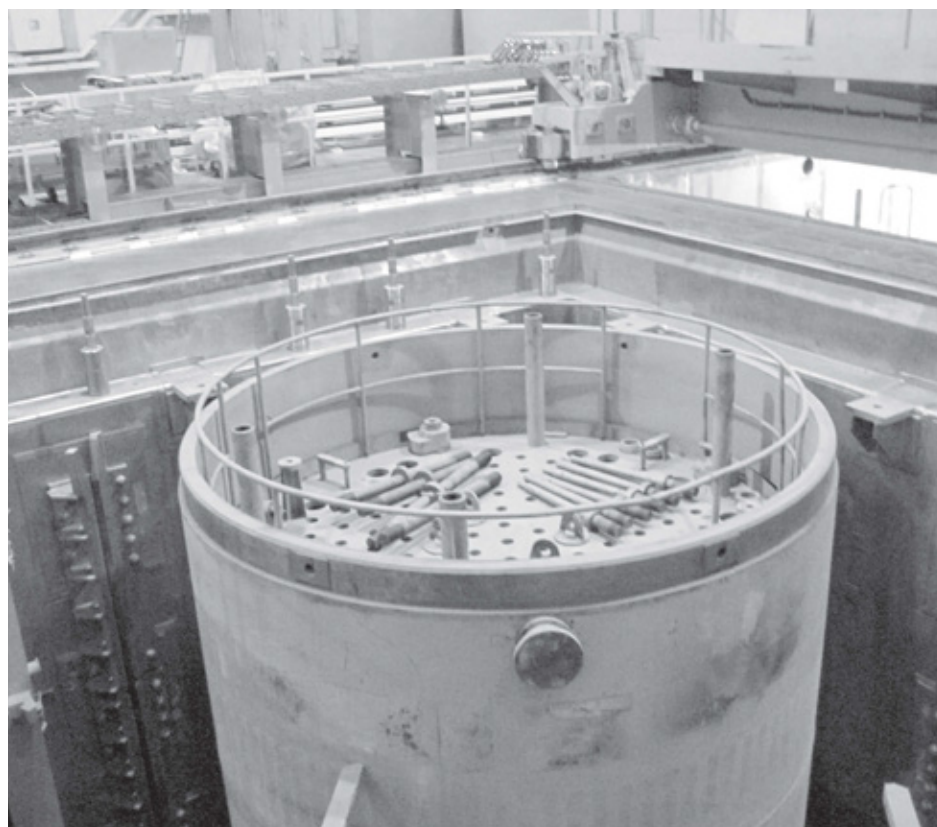
Cuba opposes IAEA resolution

The IAEA resolution was approved 25-3 by the agency's board of governors. Only the governments of Cuba, Venezuela, and Malaysia voted against. Six countries—Afghanistan, Brazil, Egypt, Pakistan, South Africa, and Turkey—abstained. The United States, France, Germany, Japan, United Kingdom, India, China, and Russia were among those that voted in favor.

Beijing and Moscow have important economic ties with Tehran, and have been Washington's chief obstacle in bringing the full weight of the UN Security Council to bear against Iran. Their vote to censure Iran represents a blow for the Iranian government.

Moscow has an agreement with Tehran to help build the nuclear plant at Bushehr. However, completion of the plant, originally scheduled for 1999, has been delayed again to next year. Moscow also has yet to make good on its contract to deliver S-300 surface-to-air missiles to Iran.

Leading up to the IAEA resolution, Tehran had rejected a proposal backed by Washington and other imperial-



Reuters

Inside nuclear power plant in Bushehr, Iran. Plant is under construction with Russian assistance as imperialists mount pressure to halt Iranian nuclear program.

ist powers to ship about 70 percent of its low-enriched uranium to Russia and France for further enrichment and processing into fuel rods. Tehran had countered the proposal, aimed at controlling the amount of uranium it has on hand, with a proposal to carry out the swap of its uranium in smaller batches after receiving the processed material.

Tehran declared that within two months it would begin construction of five new enrichment facilities and would later build five others in locations to be determined. Iran's cabinet also said it will consider enriching its own uranium from 5 percent—useful for power generation—to 20 percent for use in its medical research reactor. About 90 percent is necessary for a nuclear weapon.

Tehran's ability to carry through

with its declared ambition on its own is questionable. Less than half of Iran's 8,745 centrifuges at Bushehr are operational, according to a November IAEA report. The plans for Bushehr include 54,000 centrifuges, in the range needed to supply a power plant. The low-capacity Qom facility has as yet no centrifuges.

Iran's 20-Year Vision Plan for Economic, Social, and Cultural Development (2005–2025) projects 20 nuclear power plants with 500,000 centrifuges producing 20,000 megawatts. This would require producing roughly 200 times the nuclear fuel per year than Iran currently has.

Leading up to the IAEA vote, Tehran conducted large-scale military exercises for five days throughout the country aimed at preparing for attacks against its nuclear facilities.

Iranian workers fight for back pay, wages

Continued from front page

ter the building under the condition that they would address their grievances, ILNA reported.

A week earlier 1,000 ITI workers had demonstrated in front of the provincial government offices in Shiraz, calling for the dismissal of the governor. Workers were demanding nine months' back pay.

Four hundred workers at the Aluminum Factory in Arak rallied in the plant November 15 and pulled a Basij emblem off the wall. A week earlier the workers had held a protest rally in the factory yard.

The Basij is an auxiliary formation of the Pasdaran, or Guards of the Is-

lamic Revolution, the military force that is increasingly dominant in the government. The Basij and Pasdaran have been buying up more and more privately owned or government-auctioned industries. Aluminum workers in Arak have protested because the Basij is taking over the company and refusing to pay workers back wages.

As the pace of factory closings and layoffs increase, the capitalists in Iran, as elsewhere, are attempting to trample on contracts and withhold workers' wages and benefits to the degree they can. Back wages and benefits are at the center of workers' protest actions.

Two hundred fifty workers at the Jahaad Nasr Company, which does housing construction projects in the Kurdish city of Sanandaj, went on strike November 11. They had not been paid for four months.

In late October some 200 workers at the Alborz Ceramics Factory, near the city of Ghazvin, marched out of the plant and rallied for an hour in front of the municipal building in town. Then they marched around the town while surrounded by security forces. The workers chanted, "Government support to workers: is a lie, is a lie! Workers: solidarity, solidarity!"

A few days later the Ziaraan meat-packing workers in Ghazvin, owed back wages for six months, marched nearly five miles to press their griev-

ances with the municipality's governor. Meat packers said major problems started when the company was privatized in 2007.

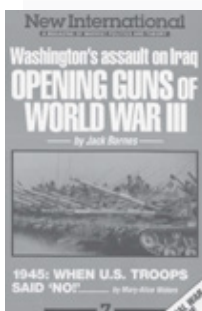
On November 2 bread bakers reached an agreement with the Sanandaj municipality, beating back an attempt to cut their wages and winning a slight wage increase. In late October the bakers struck for three hours to warn against attempts to cut their wages, and issued an ultimatum that they would strike for a whole day if their demands were not met. Bread is the main staple of workers in Iran and is heavily subsidized by the government.

Ali Najati, the central leader of the Haft Tape (Seven Hills) sugar workers union in Khuzistan, was arrested and taken to prison November 14 to serve a six-month term imposed earlier. Shortly before, four other members of the executive committee of the union started serving four- to six-month prison sentences.

Ever since the organizing drive started for the Haft Tape union, its leaders have been harassed and intermittently jailed for union activity.

Reza Rakhshahn, a member of the union, told ILNA that more than 1,000 Haft Tape workers rallied to demand their back pay. ILNA pointed out that the rally took place after the leaders of the union went to jail, indicating that the workers are not intimidated.

For further reading. . .



New International issue no. 7 Includes 'Lessons from the Iran-Iraq War'

by Samad Sharif

Also available in Farsi, French, Spanish, and Swedish. \$14

New International issue no. 12 Featuring 'Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun'

by Jack Barnes

Also available in Farsi, French, Greek, Spanish, and Swedish. \$16

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1971 raid on Cuban town, one of many U.S. assaults

Eyewitnesses address Cuban Five meeting

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

BOCA DE SAMÁ, Cuba—Thirty-eight years after a CIA-organized terror squad launched a deadly attack here, residents of this coastal village continue to speak out against Washington's ongoing acts of aggression targeting the Cuban people and their revolution.

Nancy Pavón was 15 years old when she was seriously wounded in the 1971 assault. She told the story of what happened at a November 22 meeting here with three dozen visitors taking part in an international conference on the campaign to free five Cuban revolutionaries unjustly imprisoned in the United States. Another 20 or so townspeople also took part.

"Our five heroes are in prison because they were trying to prevent acts of terrorism like this one," Pavón said.

She was referring to Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González, who in the 1990s entered counterrevolutionary groups in South Florida to inform the Cuban government of plans for similar attacks against the Cuban people. In 1998 the U.S. government arrested and framed the Cuban Five, as they are known internationally, on charges of "conspiracy to commit espionage," "conspiracy to commit murder," and other counts. Serving sentences ranging from 15 years to two life sentences plus 15 years, the five have now been locked up for more than 11 years.

The visit to Boca de Samá was part

of the Fifth International Colloquium for the Release of the Cuban Five and Against Terrorism, held November 19–22 in the eastern city of Holguín, about 40 miles from here. Nearly 200 people from 45 countries attended that gathering, which was sponsored by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). (See article on the Holguín conference in last week's issue.)

On the final day of the conference, delegates divided up into smaller groups to visit different towns throughout Holguín Province to exchange experiences with local residents about the worldwide fight to free the five Cubans.

CIA-organized assault

Pavón recounted what happened on the night of Oct. 12, 1971. Some eight to 10 heavily armed counterrevolutionaries landed on the shores of the fishing village of 85 inhabitants, located at the mouth of the Samá River on Cuba's northern coast. Members of the revolutionary militia rushed to the scene, Pavón said. The attackers fired on the militia members with automatic weapons, killing two, Ramón Siam and Lidio Rivaflecha, and seriously wounding another.

The counterrevolutionaries escaped by motorboat, leaving behind a crate of firebombs they had not had time to use. From the mother ship off the coast, they shelled the village, damaging houses and wounding several residents. Among them were Nancy Pavón and her 13-year-old sister An-



Radio Angulo/Amauris Betancourt

Nancy Pavón, wounded at age 15 in 1971 CIA-organized attack on Cuban village of Boca de Samá, speaks at November 22 meeting as part of International Colloquium on Cuban Five held in Holguín, Cuba. Others from left: Amaury Torno of Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples and author Rodolfo Dávalos.

gela, whose home was hit by mortar fire. Nancy was so badly injured that doctors had to amputate her foot, and she later required multiple operations. Because of that, she recalled, she was unable to wear her new pair of shoes to her *quinceañera* (15th birthday) celebration.

Cuban working people and their leadership mobilized in response to the murderous assault. Local residents recalled how they organized a rally in support of the revolution, addressed by Juan Almeida and Armando Hart, central leaders of the Cuban Revolution.

Nancy Pavón was joined at the meeting by her mother and by her sisters Angela and Xiomara. Speaking to the audience, Xiomara, who at the time of the attack was returning from a brigade of volunteer coffee pickers, said, "The U.S. government is not capable of understanding us. We continue to remain firm, defending our country."

Rodolfo Dávalos, author of *United States vs. The Cuban Five: A Judicial Coverup*, also spoke, noting that two CIA-trained outfits, Alpha 66 and the Cuban Liberation Front, each claimed credit for the terror attack.

'Freeing our five brothers is our fight'

Griselda Rivaflecha, daughter of Lidio Rivaflecha, and Yudirka Siam, daughter of Ramón Siam, were young children when their fathers were murdered. They recounted how the terror attack changed their lives—both the tragedy for their families and their lifelong determination to win justice.

Yudirka Siam, who works as a bookkeeper at an elementary school in the area, said her father was 24 when he was killed. "He was training as a border guard," she said. "He was a revolutionary. I grew up following his example."

She added, "We will keep fighting for justice. Today the U.S. government is holding our five brothers in prison, and we are fighting for their freedom."

Rivaflecha and Siam were joined on the speakers platform by Irma Schwerert, mother of René González, and Odalys Pérez, whose father Wilfredo Pérez was the pilot of a Cuban airplane that was downed over Barbados in 1976 when U.S.-trained counterrevolutionaries detonated a bomb they had placed on board. All 73 passengers and crew members were killed. Pérez

noted that the U.S. government has not prosecuted those responsible for the deaths, including Orlando Bosch and Luis Posada Carriles, who still walk the streets of Miami.

Among those who spoke in the discussion period was Ninoska Coronado Lira, from Tarija, Bolivia, who together with her mother Hortensia Lira was participating in the Holguín conference on the Cuban Five. She explained that she is the daughter of Benjamín Coronado, one of the Bolivian combatants who were part of the 1966–67 guerrilla column led by Ernesto Che Guevara in Bolivia. Coronado, who used Benjamín as his nom de guerre, was the first combatant to die in that military campaign.

Changes brought by revolution

Afterward, a visit to the history museum in Boca de Samá was organized with the assistance of local historian Yurisay Pérez. The museum documents the history of the area, from the original Taíno Indian communities to today. The exhibits illustrated the fight against Spanish colonial rule in that region, and how after independence the area became the property of the United Fruit Company, which owned the large banana plantations there. The displays also depicted how in that region the Rebel Army's Second Eastern Front, commanded by Raúl Castro, led the 1956–58 revolutionary war against the Batista dictatorship.

Yurisay Pérez noted that the Cuban Revolution had brought many changes to Boca de Samá since 1971, when it was a cluster of 16 houses with no reliable source of electricity or other basic facilities. Today, while still a small community of 150 inhabitants, all homes have electricity and running water, and there is an elementary school, a doctor's office, a cultural center, and the history museum.

Nancy Pavón told the visitors that she and many other Boca de Samá residents have joined the international campaign for the release of the Cuban Five. Following a recent Cuban radio broadcast of an interview with Pavón that Ramón Labañino listened to from his prison cell, he sent her a message saying that if the actions of the Cuban Five helped prevent a single other human being from being injured as she was, their efforts were worth it.

For further reading . . .

The Inevitable Battle

by Juan Carlos Rodríguez

The U.S.-led invasion of Cuba in April 1961 was defeated in 66 hours by militia battalions composed of worker and peasant volunteers, along with soldiers from the Cuban armed forces. The failure of the attack was not due to poor strategy on the part of the invading forces. But the human material available to Washington could not match the courage and determination of a people fighting to defend what they had gained through the continent's first socialist revolution. —\$20

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes

The Cuban Revolution of 1959 had a worldwide political impact, including on workers and youth in the imperialist heartland. —\$10

United States vs. The Cuban Five A Judicial Coverup

By Rodolfo Dávalos Fernández

Reviews every aspect of the U.S. government's prosecution of the five men in the light of U.S. and international law. —\$22.00

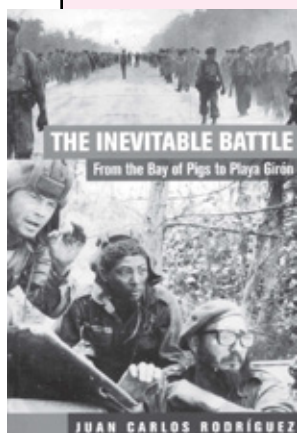
Hoping in Solitude

Antonio, Fernando, Ramón, René, Gerardo

By Eduardo Heras León, editor

A collection of poetry, essays, paintings, and music from prominent Cuban artists in honor of the Cuban Five. —\$25.00

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Cuban youth: ‘We are ones who will improve socialism’

BY JACOB PERASSO
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA, November 27—More than 15,000 university and high school youth held a spirited march here today honoring eight medical students executed by the Spanish colonial regime on this date in 1871. Joined by neighborhood residents, the march proceeded from the historic steps at the entrance to the University of Havana, down San Lázaro Street, to a monument dedicated to the slain students.

The march, an annual event highlighting a key chapter in Cuba’s history of revolutionary struggles, was organized by the University Students Federation (FEU), Federation of High School Students, and Union of Young Communists.

The colonial authorities falsely accused the eight medical students—youths between the ages of 16 and 21—of desecrating the grave of a Spanish writer loyal to the crown. Their execution by firing squad was an attempt to terrorize and quell the widespread support for independence among young Cubans at that time. In fact, the killings only fueled popular anger against Spanish colonial rule.

On that same day in 1871, five black Cubans, armed with rifles, were killed as they attempted to rescue the medical students from Spanish soldiers. (An article from the November 26 issue of the Cuban daily *Granma* recounting the events of 1871 will appear in the next issue of the *Militant*.) The five belonged to an Abakuá group, a secret society organized by blacks—both free and enslaved—to defend themselves and protect their culture in face of slavery and colonial rule. One of the five was an *hermano de leche* (“milk brother”—nursed by the same woman) of one of the eight students.

A public commemoration of the Abakuá martyrs—the first such broadly sponsored commemoration in Cuba—was also held November 27. It was called by the Union of Writers and Artists, FEU, and a number of other organizations. Addressing the student marchers at the foot of the university steps, FEU president Gladys Gutiérrez noted that the Cuban people, through their socialist revolution, have gained control of their destiny. “These streets, like those of all of Cuba, have owners: they are ours,” she said.

The new generations in Cuba today “have many reasons to continue the revolution and maintain socialism,” Gutiérrez added. “The shortages, things we lack, and imperfections, acknowledged by the leadership of our country, will not be resolved under any other system, nor through intervention against the sovereignty of our country of any kind,” she said. “We are the ones who will improve socialism ourselves, here in Cuba.”

After Gutiérrez’s remarks, students poured down the university steps, chanting slogans and waving banners from their schools—University of Havana, Enrique José Varona Teacher Training Institute, Higher Institute of Industrial Design, University of Technical Science, and numerous other universities and high schools.



Militant/Jacob Perasso

November 27 march by university and high school students in Havana to honor eight medical students executed on this day in 1871 by Spanish colonial regime. Related event paid tribute to black Cubans who died trying to free medical students.

Venezuela book fair shows thirst for politics

BY RÓGER CALERO

CARACAS, Venezuela—More than 80,000 people visited the Fifth Venezuela International Book Fair here November 13–22. They browsed and purchased books and other publications from the more than 200 exhibitors, from 14 different countries, represented at this annual cultural event.

The fair featured more than 400 forums, book presentations, conferences, concerts, movies, and educational activities.

“Books about history and politics are the most sold, according to the daily surveys,” said Héctor Soto, Venezuela’s minister of culture, at the closing of the fair. “Something is happening with people, that is making them buy books about history and politics,” he said.

An indication of the interest referred to by Soto was the many discussions between visitors and volunteers at the Pathfinder Press stand. A total of 417 copies of *New Internationalist*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory, were sold in Spanish and English. They featured the articles “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun”; “Imperialism’s March toward Fascism and War”; and “Revolution, Internationalism, and Socialism: The Last Year of Malcolm X.”

Participants in the fair also bought dozens of copies of the Spanish edition of *The First and Second Declarations of Havana*, *The Communist Manifesto*, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, and *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?*

Some of the visitors to the Pathfinder stand, who knew the publishing house from previous fairs, were particularly interested in discussing the course undertaken by the new U.S. administration.

Many who held illusions in then recently elected President Barack

Obama wanted to discuss the extension of the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the so-called health-care reform proposals, and the incapacity of the U.S. government to turn around the deepening economic crisis despite billions poured into capitalist institutions, among other issues.

Effects of world capitalist crisis

During the fair, the Central Bank of Venezuela (BCV) reported that the country’s economy had contracted by 4.5 percent in the third quarter, officially putting Venezuela in an economic recession.

The BCV reported that oil revenues dropped by 9.5 percent this last period dragging along other sectors of the economy. Manufacturing shrank by 9.2 percent; mining by 18.3 percent; transportation by 11.1 percent; and retail sales, 11.5 percent, according to the central bank.

Many of the fair’s visitors pointed to the rampant inflation, annualized at 29 percent, which eats up the income of workers and retirees. Some blamed the big capitalist corporations who have control of food production and distribution.

Example of the Cuban Revolution

The fair was dedicated this year to Bolivia, as the honored country, and José Luis Briceño Guerrero, the honored Venezuelan writer. It also paid tribute to Haydée Santamaría, and the 50th anniversary of the Cuban publishing house Casa de las Américas.

Santamaría was a founder of Casa de las Américas when it was created a few months after the January 1959 revolutionary victory against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

Santamaría also took part in the 1953 assault on the Moncada barracks, which opened the revolutionary struggle led by the July 26 Movement

and Rebel Army under the leadership of Fidel Castro. She later also undertook extensive responsibilities in the revolutionary war.

“Casa de las Américas was a cultural project that went from intentions to actions,” said Roberto Zurbano, director of Casa de las Américas publishing collection, at a program during the fair hosted by the ALBA Cultural Fund. He highlighted that along with Casa de las Américas, the new government established the national film institute, the national ballet, and the national printshop, among the first institutions created by the Cuban Revolution.

Joining Zurbano on the panel were the well-known Venezuelan writers Laura Antillano and Humberto Mata, both of whom have served as jurors in the prestigious literary contest organized by Casa de las Américas every year for writers from across Latin America and the Caribbean.

Another highlight of the book fair was the presentation of the documentary *Saharawi, Africa’s Last Colony* directed by Carlos Azpúrua. The film documents the struggle by the people of Western Sahara against foreign domination of their land. A former colony of Spain, the country, located in northwestern Africa, continues to be occupied by Morocco, with the support of French and U.S. imperialism.

Michell Bonnefoy, vice president of the National Book Center, said that in addition to the 80,000 visitors to the Caracas chapter of the fair, some 60,000 others visited the fair during its stops in other cities.

He called special attention to the thousands of visitors to the Children’s Pavilion, and the Librerías del Sur (Bookstores of the South) stand where 4,000 people purchased books, taking advantage of the low prices offered by the Venezuelan publishing house El Perro y la Rana.

Lenin: Imperialism is highest stage of capitalism

Below is an excerpt from Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, by V.I. Lenin, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December. Writing in 1916, Lenin laid bare the origins and economic workings of imperialism as a stage of development of the capitalist system, not a policy "preferred" by finance capital but one inherent to its functioning. "Unless this is studied," Lenin wrote in the preface the following year, "it will be impossible to understand and appraise modern war and modern politics." Copyright © 2002 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY V.I. LENIN

Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general. But capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a definite and very high stage of its development, when certain of its fundamental characteristics began to change into their opposites, when the features of the epoch of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system had taken shape and revealed themselves in all spheres. Economically, the main thing in this process is the displacement of capital-



V.I. Lenin (center) with Leon Trotsky to his left, at time of the Russian Revolution in 1917. One year earlier in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* Lenin explained the economic essence of the imperialist system, necessary for understanding modern wars and politics.

ist free competition by capitalist monopoly. Free competition is the basic feature of capitalism, and of commodity production generally; monopoly is the exact opposite of free competition, but we have seen the latter being transformed into monopoly before our eyes, creating large-scale industry and forcing out small industry, replacing large-scale by still larger-scale industry, and carrying concentration of production and capital to the point where out of it has grown and is growing monopoly: cartels, syndicates and trusts, and merging with them, the capital of a dozen or so banks, which manipulate thousands of millions. At the same time the monopolies, which have grown out of free competition, do not eliminate the latter, but exist above it and alongside it, and thereby give rise to a number of very acute, intense antagonisms, frictions and conflicts. Monopoly is the transition from capitalism to a higher system.

If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. Such a definition would include what is most important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist associations of industrial-

ists; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories unseized by any capitalist power, to a colonial policy of monopolist possession of the territory of the world, which has been completely divided up.

But very brief definitions, although convenient, for they sum up the main points, are nevertheless inadequate, since we have to deduce from them some especially important features of the phenomenon that has to be defined. And so, without forgetting the conditional and relative value of all definitions in general, which can never embrace all the concatenations of a phenomenon in its full development, we must give a definition of imperialism that will include the following five of its basic features:

(1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; (2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital," of a financial oligarchy; (3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; (4) the formation of international monopolist

capitalist associations which share the world among themselves, and (5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed. Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.

We shall see later that imperialism can and must be defined differently if we bear in mind not only the basic, purely economic concepts—to which the above definition is limited—but also the historical place of this stage of capitalism in relation to capitalism in general, or the relation between imperialism and the two main trends in the working-class movement. The thing to be noted at this point is that imperialism, as interpreted above, undoubtedly represents a special stage in the development of capitalism. . . .

In the matter of defining imperialism, however, we have to enter into controversy, primarily, with Karl Kautsky, the principal Marxist theoretician of the epoch of the so-called Second International—that is, of the twenty-five years between 1889 and 1914. The fundamental ideas expressed in our definition of imperialism were very resolutely attacked by Kautsky in 1915, and even in November 1914, when he said that imperialism must not be regarded as a "phase" or stage of economy, but as a policy, a definite policy "preferred" by finance capital; that imperialism must not be "identified" with "present-day capitalism"; that if imperialism is to be understood to mean "all the phenomena of present-day capitalism"—cartels, protection, the domination of the financiers, and colonial policy—then the question as to whether imperialism is necessary to capitalism becomes reduced to the "flattest tautology," because, in that case, "imperialism is naturally a vital necessity for capitalism," and so on.

December

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OF THE MONTH

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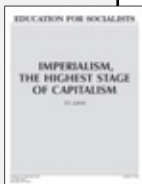
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Not one penny, not one person!

Continued from front page

Obama in the war in Afghanistan—sending 30,000 more troops and continuing the U.S. war there through at least July 2011. Former vice president Richard Cheney accused Obama of projecting “weakness” and charged that his delay in coming to a decision undermines the confidence of the troops.

Vice President Joseph Biden has opposed sending the additional troops, proposing instead increased use of bombings from aerial drones, Special Forces operations to kill al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders, and pressing Pakistan to crack down on Taliban bases along its border.

Rep. John Murtha, Democrat from Pennsylvania, laments that there is not much that opponents of the war in Congress can do to stop the escalation. He has predicted that Congress would pass a \$40 billion war-financing bill early next year to pay for the deployments, reported Fox News. This would be consistent with the bipartisan votes in Congress for funding the war during the George Bush administration.

Arizona senator John McCain, defeated by Obama in the 2008 presidential elections, criticized the president’s plan to begin withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in July 2011. “We don’t want to sound an uncertain trumpet to our friends in the region,” McCain said.

Others, like Sen. Carl Levin, Democrat from Michigan, emphasized the withdrawal date, saying the goal needs to be to accelerate the transition to Afghan responsibility.

Whatever tactical differences these capitalist politicians may have with the White House on Afghanistan,

they are in fundamental agreement with the “war on terror,” a perspective of decades of military clashes as the U.S. ruling class seeks to compete with rival capitalists abroad for markets in the midst of a sharp, worldwide economic contraction.

The U.S. capitalist rulers are facing the deepest crisis of their system in decades. This is at the root of the Obama administration’s “dithering” and “delays.” It registers the awareness by the rulers of the growing vulnerability of their system and their lack of confidence in finding a decisive course forward against the world’s toilers. Accelerating war is the only course they can offer.

While Obama talks about “winding down” the war in Afghanistan, 115,000 U.S. troops remain in Iraq. Washington is threatening Iran and North Korea with more crippling sanctions. Working people should also demand: Hands off Iran and North Korea!

Class-conscious workers should be encouraged by the protests by workers in Iran for back pay in wages and in defense of unions. These actions help stay the hands of the imperialist aggressors against Iran and are an essential step in working people winning the political space necessary to chart a road forward against the dead-end course of Iran’s capitalist rulers.

Obama’s announcement of the escalation of the war in Afghanistan was met with protests in several cities across the country. Such actions deserve wholehearted support. But protests alone, however large and determined, will not stop imperialist wars. To do that, working people must join in a worldwide struggle to take political power and use it to overturn the dictatorship of capital root and branch.

Obama increases troops in Afghanistan

Continued from page 4

and focusing more on al-Qaeda bases in Pakistan and less on Taliban groups in Afghanistan.

Conservative columnist George Will put forward a similar view.

Many Republicans, however, and some leading Democrats in Congress came out in support of McChrystal’s request.

Criticism for ‘foot-dragging’

Obama came under stiff criticism by conservatives for “foot-dragging” on making a decision. On December 1 former vice president Richard Cheney complained that the delays have consequences for forces in the field. “Every time he delays, defers, debates, changes his position, it begins to raise questions: Is the commander in chief really behind what they’ve been asked to do?”

Much of the discussion after Obama’s troop announcement focused on his timetable for beginning withdrawal.

“Setting a deadline—so long as it is not set in stone—is a sound idea,” the *New York Times* said in an editorial.

“We support Mr. Obama’s decision,” the *Wall Street Journal* stated. But the conservative daily said Obama’s “early exit underscores our larger concern about his own war diffidence.”

The assessment presented by McChrystal proposed imitating aspects of the successful tactics Washington used in Iraq that allowed it to cobble together a somewhat stable capitalist regime, win over major sections of groups that had previously supported armed insurgents, kill or arrest large numbers of those who could not be won over, and build up the Iraqi army and police as effective fighting forces.

A key element in Iraq was the “surge,” when former president George W. Bush sent 30,000 additional troops in just a few months that took advantage of a weakening insurgency and dealt it a series of major blows.

Legacy of imperialist domination

Afghanistan is not the same as Iraq. It does not have the same level of social development and class structure.

Although the population size is similar, 28.4 million

people in Afghanistan and close to 30 million in Iraq. Iraq is much more industrialized with a modern capitalist class structure. Iraq has oil and other resources of significant interest to the U.S. and other imperialists as well as Iraqi capitalists.

About 70 percent of Iraqis live in urban areas. In Afghanistan 75 percent live in the countryside, where social relations similar to those that existed 100 years ago still prevail.

U.S. forces in Afghanistan have attempted to win some lower-ranking Taliban fighters to the U.S.-backed side. While Muhammad Akram Khaplawak, administrator for Kabul’s Peace and Reconciliation Commission, claims that some 9,000 Taliban have turned in their weapons and accepted an amnesty, there have been no reports of any significant group of former insurgents taking up arms against the Taliban.

The U.S. military was able to turn the tide in Iraq when a substantial section of Sunni capitalists cut funding and combat logistics for insurgent forces and raised a militia of thousands to aid the occupying troops.

A central part of U.S. strategy already being carried out is to accelerate the training of the Afghan army and police. Since occupying Afghanistan eight years ago, Washington has succeeded in building up the Afghan forces to 82,000 soldiers and 134,000 police. But they have shown little fighting capacity.

Help from NATO?

It’s unlikely that Washington will get much more help from its NATO allies. Aside from London, which has agreed to add 500 more troops to its 9,000 soldiers already stationed in Afghanistan—the second largest NATO contingent—only the governments of Poland, Slovakia, Turkey, Georgia, South Korea, and Montenegro have expressed any willingness to send more troops.

The fourth largest NATO contingent is from France with some 3,000 troops. In mid-October President Nicolas Sarkozy told *Le Figaro* that “France will not send a single soldier more.”

The third-largest contingent, about 4,300 troops, is from Germany. But the German troops rarely engage in major combat operations or fight at night.

Economic crisis

Continued from front page

more on their mortgage balances than their houses are worth.

Working people renting apartments are feeling the impact of the crisis as well, with wealthy owners of apartment buildings defaulting on their loans. In the Bronx, New York, for example, the real estate investment company Ocelot Capital Group bought about two dozen buildings in 2006 and 2007. Ten of them the following year were on the city’s list of most dilapidated rental properties. With the owner defaulting on loan payments last winter, living conditions there have gone from bad to unbearable.

Alfredo Martinez, 35, a truck driver who lives in one of these buildings, “has stretched a garden hose from his kitchen to bring water to flush the toilet; plastered his disintegrated walls, adding metal screens to stop mice from chewing through; and repaired the ceiling twice after a leak caused it to cave in,” the *Post* reported.

The number of New York apartment units “in buildings at risk of default because of upside down loans—in which the property is worth less than is owed on the loan—could range from 50,000 to 100,000,” according to the *Post*.

Dubai can’t meet debt payments

In another development, the government of Dubai announced November 25 that it needed a six-month deferment on interest payments on the \$59 billion debt owed by the government-owned investment company Dubai World and its real estate subsidiary Nakheel. On December 14, \$3.5 billion in Nakheel bonds will come due. The announcement sent shock waves through capitalist markets worldwide.

Dubai World is one of the world’s largest investment groups. The tens of billions of dollars it borrowed in a four-year construction boom were aimed at transforming the city-state into one of the world’s financial centers. Its flashy projects included not just building office towers and hotels, but an indoor ski slope and a man-made island shaped like a palm tree.

Among the largest lenders to Dubai are banks in the United Kingdom. The Royal Bank of Scotland, Standard Chartered, Barclays, and HSBC are owed more than \$30 billion, according to a J.P. Morgan report. The largest lender from the United States is Citigroup, with a debt estimated at \$1.9 billion.

The threat of default goes beyond Dubai. “The Greek government is grappling with a fiscal crisis, and several Eastern European governments increasingly appear in perilous financial shape, including Hungary, Poland, and the Baltic states,” noted the *Post*. “Western European banks have lent heavily in those nations, meaning any collapse could send tremors across the continent.”

Rising interest payments on U.S. debt

Meanwhile, interest payments on U.S. debt to wealthy bondholders are projected to rise rapidly. With the national debt now topping \$12 trillion, interest payments will exceed \$700 billion a year in 2019, up from \$202 billion this year, according to White House estimates.

A forecast by the Congressional Budget Office says that total interest payments over the next decade will come to \$4.8 trillion, more than half of the projected \$9 trillion in debt the government is expected to build up over the next decade.

As debts become due the government rolls them over, borrowing additional funds—most likely at higher interest rates to pay back lenders. A Treasury borrowing advisory committee reported in early November that “approximately 40 percent of the debt will need to be refinanced in less than one year,” reported CNNMoney.com.

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